# Notes from groups

December 6, 2013

## College writing:

* There is no one type of writing/reading that students need for postsecondary
* Need to analyze
* Understand professor’s requirements (audience awareness)
* Allowing students access to a variety of information for synthesis/making argument, not just summarizing
* Being thoughtful about arguments: valid?
* Depth? Sophistication of thought? Good/great writing?
* Students can analyze the quality of their own writing
* Students need to take risks
* How about caring about the topic? Not just going through the motions.
* With access to so much information out there, students need to know how to think about that info.
* Passion rather than just a skill

## Writing in the disciplines:

* Interwoven with workplace writing needs/demands
* Regardless of the discipline, writers need to communicate.
* Through writing about passions, they connect to what happens in the disciplines and in the workplace.
* The role of play influenced teacher reflection about their own practice
* A relief that teachers don’t have to be the experts in all areas, but teachers need to be able to help students link with the experts that they need to learn from.
* Writing in the disciplines has changed over time, so we may writing like a journalist NOW but in the near future that might be different. The question is how do we keep current?
* Important to teach students to know how to find resources so they can be independent. It’s about the thinking that they need to do rather than the “algorithm” of the good writing.

## Writing in the workplace:

* Several articles about writing in the workplace
* CareerBuilder.com – communication as a starting place in the work place
* The role of an English teacher is critical even as we talk about STEM issues.
* One presenter from Northrup Grumman stressed the importance of intellectual property so being able to grow that is critical, especially as we think about communication and writing.
* Management
* Getting a job can be connected to communication/writing skills

# What do we do?

* Teachers need to know that there are innovators “in the room” so you’re not alone; we need to capture the stories; this kind of work resonates – conversations about possibilities and tensions.
* Implication: going public, capturing the conversations and going public
* With the doubt and the fear, we need support by being public.
* Being available and sharing enthusiasm even in resistance or hesitation; posing questions in casual situation (at lunch)
* “When things are scary, I innovate because if distracts me from other things.”
* How to support those who worry about failing?
* Evaluation/teacher effectiveness rubric = fear, which can lead to shutting down.
* What’s the role of the district? Leadership?
* Tension, once again, between covering and learning
* Reminder about why we became teachers
* Being a reality check and offering honest support: providing another lens of “data”
* Supporting teachers into not being bullied into making bad decisions that are lousy for kids
* Ways to celebrate innovation

Wyatt Jones, Colorado Housing and Finance Authority

Economic development

Writing often occurs:

* Marketing of programs
* Credit analysis
* Guiding founding to completion
* Program completion

Examples:

* Board presentation and committee memos
  + Think about purpose: showing vs telling
  + Think about ease of reading: attention on audience.
* Internal memos
* Grant of funding applications
* Correspondence: emails
  + Internal/external
  + Must be formal – important to think about the audience

Purposes:

* Informational
* Record keeping, audit item
* Build trust
* Sell concepts

Narrative:

* Tone depends on audience, purpose: importance of voice
* Conventions/grammar: critical
* Expectations of those entering the field
  + Huge piece of what he does
  + Explaining and painting the big picture
* When too informal, it feels as though the writer doesn’t care.

Internal memo:

*Don’t confuse me. I’m a lender.*

What I’m hearing is that as a writer he has to be:

* Flexible
* Very clear about audience both the current audience and the future audience (If a memo is going in the file, think about someone who reads it in 5 years when you’re not around.)
* Think about writing within a context; often the writing includes a presentation so it’s typically not a stand alone.
* Aware of mentor text! (He learned how to write like this by studying how others wrote similar kinds of texts.)

**Take aways:**

* Don’t deny other types of writing; the formal essay isn’t the only thing is.
* The role of choice in writing – don’t just box them in but open up what we ask them to do.
* We don’t have to teach everything!
* Sometimes it’s about getting something down on paper.
* Important that they have the skills
* Variety; thinking about a collection of work, a body of evidence that would meet different
* Voice matters – but there is a context that has to keep in mind.
* Audience, audience, audience!
* Build trust and develop concepts and tell a story. Very similar to Jacqueline Beane’s talk about telling a powerful story for audiences.
* We have to give kids a variety of audiences.
* Still learning to write at the job – you keep on learning. For instance, you want to write a memo; then you better read a lot of mentors.
* Try it and watch the response so you can make the changes/revisions that you need to do.
* *Writing to build trust* …
* At some point the writing is just DONE!
* A question: how authentic is the AP exam or other on the spot prompted writing?

## Jenny Henry’s innovative classroom:

* She changed her classroom because she was burned out and convinced that what she was doing wasn’t good for kids. However, when she started working on 21st century skills and UbD, she started getting excited once again.
* She starts with looking at the standards and then deconstructing the standards with them and then connects to their passions.

**Take aways and hopes for next steps:**

* Risk taking – modeling; *more classroom stories*
* Genius Hour with seniors: what do I own? How do I assess my own work? Discussions – Google+ and post about teachers; *collect stories and invite others*
* I don’t have to be an expert in anything; *hope to learn more about innovation*
* As a coach, I watch many teachers hold on to classroom control, holding tight; in releasing control, teacher got more control; more speakers from world of work and teachers who are innovators
* I need to figure out how to give kids more control; *continue what we’re doing*
* I want to take the risks; *do some of the exploration together*
* Kids who don’t do well is class in another context can become learners; are we teaching what matters? *How do we create that innovative classroom and integrate different subjects?*
* Struck by the power of choice and freedom to explore in meaningful environments; too often we see the opposite of this kind of exploration; how do we get people to experience and try*?; hope: would like to see this group grow!*